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C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 000514

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E  
CJTF-HOA FOR POLAD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PBTS](#) [KPAO](#) [DJ](#) [ER](#) [SO](#)  
SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI FORMIN: "LONG ROAD" FOR TFG-ARS AGREEMENT

REF: A. NAIROBI 1421  
[1](#)B. DJIBOUTI 513

Classified By: PolOff Rebecca K. Hunter for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In a June 10 courtesy call with CDA, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahamoud Ali Youssouf said he was pleased that Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) had reached an agreement at the close of talks in Djibouti on June 9, but cautioned that this achievement was the first step in a "very long process." With the breakout of hostilities on the Djibouti-Eritrea border late on June 10 (septels), Djiboutian optimism about the TFG-ARS agreement has been quickly overshadowed by immediate domestic security concerns, and speculation that Djibouti's helpfulness in hosting the talks helped push an already tense border situation to the tipping point. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) The morning after ARS and TFG delegations initialed an agreement at the end of ten days of talks in Djibouti (ref A), Djiboutian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahamoud Ali Youssouf told CDA and PolOff that while he was glad there was an agreement, he understood that this was the "beginning of a long road." He expressed frustration at the long process, saying that too many Somalis put "personal ambitions and clan interests" first, and said that the GODJ had joined with the UN to convince the delegates to concentrate instead on the real problem of rescuing the Somali people from the current "tragic situation."

[1](#)3. (C) Youssouf emphasized that USG support--especially at the level of the UN Security Council--would be vital to the successful continuation of the peace process. Without strong USG support at the Security Council, he said, it would be "very difficult" to provide an international stabilization force strong enough to allow Ethiopian troops to withdraw. Youssouf said he worried that France believed that Darfur was a higher priority than Somalia, calling the French position "not very helpful." Youssouf said that he thought it was crucial that African troops staff any international force.

[1](#)4. (C) Asked about the Arab League's expressed interest in helping to catalyze economic development in Somalia, Youssouf said that President Guelleh shared the "same vision;" namely, to provide "parallel action of development" that would eventually be the key to peace and prosperity. However, Youssouf cautioned that while Arab countries have the funds and the desire to help, the Arab League was likely to move in a "slow motion process." (NOTE: Youssouf previously served as Djibouti's Ambassador to Egypt and Representative to the Arab League. END NOTE.)

[1](#)5. (C) COMMENT: While Djibouti is proud that an agreement came out of the talks they played host to, they know from

long experience not to expect immediate results. After featuring triumphant coverage of the agreement in its June 10 edition, Djibouti's state-run daily newspaper closed its June 11 front page by pointedly drawing a link between the announcement of the TFG-ARS agreement and the breakout of hostilities on the Djibouti-Eritrea border the next day. END COMMENT.

LIST